



Educational Resources

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SIMULATION

GENERAL RESOURCES - MODIFIED RESOURCES

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PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SIMULATION

Preparing your Role – modified version

Student name: _____ **Role:** _____

Your role card tells you a little bit about the character you will be playing in the meeting. The card describes the ideas and beliefs that you will present at the committee meeting. You can also add your own opinions and details.

Before the meeting, you have to figure out the following :

- Does your character like this bill? If the answer is “yes,” think of how you will work to get the bill passed.
- Does your character think this bill is a bad idea? If so, think of how you will work to defeat the bill or to change the parts you don’t like.

Active reading

Start reading the bill again while holding a pencil. Think about how your character would react to the bill. While you are reading, record symbols in the margin after each clause to show your character’s likely feelings about the ideas:

- ++ Strongly support
- Strongly oppose
- * Find the idea interesting
- ? Find the idea confusing

After recording your character’s feelings about each section of the bill, try to stay in the role as you answer the following questions :

1. Should Canadians be able to continue with the activity addressed in the bill? Why or why not?

2. How important is this issue?

Not important at all

A little bit important

Very important

3. Are the penalties fair and reasonable?

Now fill in the chart below.

If you support the bill	If you are against the bill
What are the two most important clauses in the bill to keep and protect from someone changing them?	What are the two most important clauses in the bill to delete or change?

Now it's time to come up with one or two goals for the committee meeting, and come up with two strategies that might help your character achieve each goal. A sample answer is provided to help you understand this task.

Goal	Strategies to help achieve the goal
Sample goal: <i>Convince committee members to keep the penalty high.</i>	Sample strategies: 1. <i>Ask the minister an easy question such as, "Why is it important to have this penalty?" to provide the minister with an opportunity to convince committee members.</i> 2. <i>Think of problems that are likely to occur if the penalty is not kept at the current level.</i>



PARLIAMENT | PARLEMENT
CANADA

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PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SIMULATION

Simulation Procedures and Order of Business - modified version

The chair

The chair is a member of the committee who has been elected to run the meetings in an orderly way. He or she has the power to:

1. Limit time for the discussion or debate for any section.
2. Decide who is allowed to speak and in which order they will speak.
3. Keep the debate friendly and on the right topic.

Rules for conduct in the meeting

1. Only speak when the chair grants you permission.
2. Be polite and respectful.
3. Do not disrupt the meeting by talking or whispering during the meeting.
4. Only committee members are allowed to debate and vote.
5. Do not call people by their first names. Call Senators “Senator (last name)” and other people by “Mr.” or “Ms.” (last name).

Schedule

The chair begins the meeting by welcoming everyone. After this, the meeting will have five sections:

1. Lead Minister presentation

- The cabinet minister whose department is responsible for this bill will speak first to introduce and explain the bill.
- This will be followed by a question and answer session. Committee members may ask the minister questions.
- Committee members may also comment on the bill during question and answer time.

2. Witness presentations

- There will be four presentations by Canadians who represent groups that are interested in this bill.
- After each witness, the chair will allow committee members to ask questions of the witnesses and make comments.

3. Clause-by-clause examination of the bill

- The chair leads the committee through each clause in the main part of the bill, setting aside clause 2 (definitions).
- For each clause, the chair asks if there is any discussion. At that point you may speak in favour of or against the wording of the clause under discussion.

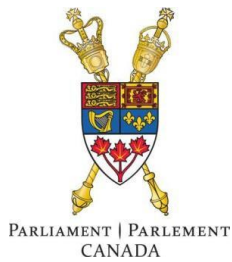
- At the end of each discussion, the chair calls for a vote on that clause.

4. Suggested amendments

- Only a member of the committee can propose an amendment, although an amendment can be drafted by an external group (such as the witnesses) and brought forward by a member of the committee.
- You are invited to write your own amendment for one of the clauses. A clause can be amended by adding, changing or deleting certain words. Use the amendment form to explain and record your proposed modification.
- If it is your job to propose an amendment, wait until the chair begins the discussion of that clause. Put up your hand, and when the chair calls on you, say : “Mr. / Madam Chair, I would propose an amendment to this clause.”
- Read out your new wording and pass the amendment paper to the clerk. The chair will ask you to speak in favour of the amendment.
- The chair will then ask for other speakers in favour of or against the amendment. At this time, members may also propose changes to the amendment being discussed.
- The chair calls for a vote on whether or not to approve the amendment to the clause.
- If the amendment passes the vote, the clerk changes the wording of the amended clause and the chair reads out the new wording.
- After the vote on the amendment, the chair calls for a vote on the clause. If there are other amendments to be proposed, they should be moved at this time. *Note: Only one amendment may be discussed at a time.
- Once a clause — with or without amendment — has been approved, the committee may begin its discussion of the next clause.

5. Vote to report the bill

- The final step for the committee is to vote on whether or not to adopt the bill and to report the bill to the Senate or House of Commons as it is now written. If you approve of the bill as it is now written, after any amendments have been made, vote “Yes.” If you oppose it as written, vote “No.” If you approve that the bill should be reported to the Senate or House of Commons, vote “Yes.” If you oppose that it should be reported, vote “No.”



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Presenting to the Committee – modified version

Name: _____

Role: _____

Read the presentation notes for your character. You can use these notes to help you make a short speech to the committee. Don't just read out the notes. To be more interesting and convincing, try to put them in your own words and talk to the committee instead of reading a speech.

What reasons might you offer the committee members to encourage them to accept your character's point of view?

1.

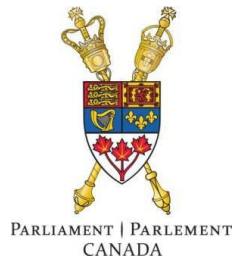
2.

3.

4.

Look at the list of witnesses. Based on the name of their group, predict the position each of them will take.

Witness group	Likely beliefs about the bill



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Preparing a Media Report – modified version

As a member of the media or “press gallery,” your job will be to write a story to tell Canadians about what transpired in this committee meeting. In doing so, you will decide what is most important and interesting to emphasize in your story.

Preparing for the simulation

Read the bill carefully.

1. What will Canadians find interesting about this bill?
2. Which clauses in the bill do you expect to pass easily?
3. Which clauses in the bill will have the most debate? Are there any clauses that you think will be defeated?

Look at the list of witnesses who will be appearing before the committee.

1. Which witnesses do you think will speak in favour of the bill? Why?
2. Which witnesses do you think will criticize the bill? Why?

During the committee meeting

Use the following charts or make your own to record notes on the important occurrences during the meeting.

Witness presentations

Name of person	What was their opinion?	Something interesting that he/she said

Debate on amendments

Clause	Did it pass? Was it amended?	An important reason that was offered

Writing the story

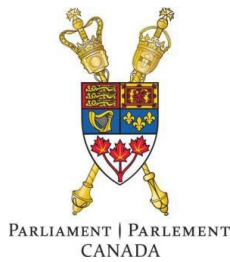
When you are writing a news story, the most important information is always at the very beginning. In a sentence or two, the reporter tries to answer the “5 Ws and the H” of a story: who, what, why, when, where and how. The reporter wants to capture what is important to know, but also to be interesting in order to get the reader to read the rest of the story. In planning your article, decide first what is most important for citizens to know about what happened at the committee meeting.

Story planning structure

Headline (several words long — designed to attract attention of reader):

5W’s and H (in one or two sentences, if possible: who, what, why, when, where and how):

Details and quotations to use in story (listed most important to least important):



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PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SIMULATION

Reflecting on the Simulation – modified version

Name: _____ **Role:** _____

1. Think about your participation in this simulation. How well did you prepare? Did you make important points? How clearly did you speak?
a. What were the best things about your performance?
b. What would you do differently next time?
2. What are the three most important things that you now understand about parliamentary committees?
a.
b.
c.
3. How do you think the experience of a real parliamentary committee may be different from how things worked in this simulation?
4. What questions do you have about parliamentary committees after doing this simulation?